

Appl. No. 09/817,653
Amdt. Dated July 28, 2003
Reply to Office action of April 28, 2003

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the careful examination given the application. In this paper claims 1 and 16 have been amended and new claim 17 has been added.

In the Office action, the Examiner rejected claims 1 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. 4,810,932 to Ahlgren et al., in view of U.S. 5,936,349 to Fukai et al. Claims 1 and 16 as amended require that the ends of the tube are open before any of the sealing steps are subsequently performed. Fukai shows a sequence of sealing and evacuation steps, but requires that one end of the tube is sealed during the initial steps. Because claims 1 and 16 require that the ends of the tube are open initially, followed by a number of subsequent sealing and evacuation steps, claims 1 and 16 define over the cited combination. For this reason, claims 1 and 16 define over the cited art.

New claim 17 depends from claim 1 and requires that the first end of the tube is held in the tailstock of a lathe, and that the second end of the tube is held in the headstock of the lathe. The cited art does not show the first and second ends of the tube being held in the headstock and tailstock of a lathe as required by new claim 17. For the reason set forth previously and for this additional reason, claim 17 defines over the cited art.

Claims 2-15 depend from claim 1 and so are allowable for the same reason. It is therefore believed that all claims are allowable. A notice of allowance is therefore respectfully requested.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. 33151 (LD11591).

Respectfully submitted,
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Date: July 28, 2003